Keeping in Touch

News and notes from
the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches

July 1994

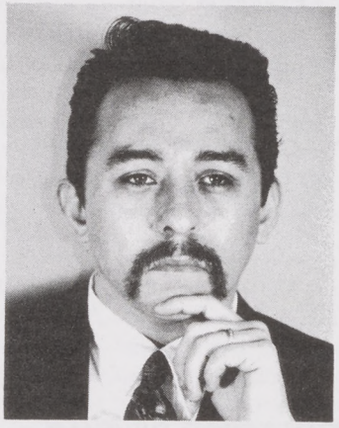
Record Conference Attendance Expected

Record numbers of people are expected to attend the UFMCC Leadership and People of Colors' Conferences Aug. 2-7 in Dallas, TX.

"I am thrilled to annouce that this year's Leadership Conference has the largest pre-registration in the history of our denomination," said Rev. Elder Troy Perry, UFMCC founder and moderator. "I expect that these will be two of the most dynamic, spirit-filled conferences ever held by UFMCC."

The deadline for mail-in registration is July 12. Registrations will also be accepted on-site at both conferences.

"Mutuality, Ministry and the New Millenium" is the theme of the Leadership Conference on Aug. 2-4, which will feature Rev. Lois Wilson of the United Church of Canada and Ms. Mary Hunt of WATER (Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual).



Mr. Martin Ornelas

Ms. Letitia Gomez

The People of Colors' Conference Aug. 5-7 will focus on the theme "Connecting, Celebrating and Communicating" with guest speakers Ms. Letitia Gomez and Mr. Martin Ornelas, both of LLEGO, the U.S. Latino/a Lesbian and Gay Organization; and Dr. Elias Farajaje-Jones a Spanish-speaking African/Native American and professor at Howard University School of Divinity.

The People of Colors' Conference will include a Friday evening "Celebration in Story & Song," the only structured social event during the conferences. Anyone interested in using the arts to tell their story may contact Mr. Bernie Barbour, 1744 Michigan Ave., Houston, TX 77006.

All conference registrants may attend a pre-conference institute from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Aug. 1 in Dallas on "The Sexual Ethics of Church Leaders" at no additional charge. More than 100 people have already registered for the institute. ❐

Canadians Battle For Equal Rights

Metropolitan Community Churches in Ontario, Canada, have battled to ensure passage of laws which would allow same-sex spousal rights, gay/lesbian adoption and change the definition of "spouse" to include same-sex partners. Unfortunately, at this stage the battle has been redirected with the defeat of the government's Omnibus Bill 147 on June 9 in the Ontario Provisional legislature. Many MCC members attended the parliamentary sessions, including Rev. Brent Hawkes of MCC Toronto and Rev. Marcie Wexler, Eastern Canadian District Coordinator.

Despite the setback of Bill 147, the gay/lesbian community and supporters are banding together to ensure future modifications of provincial and, ultimately, federal laws, to secure full and equitable recognition of all families in Canada. Among the many activities underway are a banding together of religious communities to foster full acceptance of the variety of family groupings. Interfaith services were held simultaneously across Ontario by MCC members on June 15 in celebration of "Families Valued" and to focus the anger and sorrow which were the result of the defeated bill.

Over 140 clergy from all denominations across Ontario signed a petition in favour of passage of the now defeated Bill 147. Rev. Hawkes and the members of MCC Toronto spear-headed the petition. This group will be solicited by the Campaign for Equal Families

(see Canadians, page 4)

DCs Elected

Two districts recently elected district coordinators.

Rev. Janet Suess-Pierce was elected Northwest District Coordinator, and Rev. Bev Baptiste was re-elected Western Canada District Coordinator.

Rev. Suess-Pierce was elected to serve the remaining three years of a four-year term. She succeeds Rev. Scott Phipps, who served as district coordinator for one year.

"It's critical for us to raise up and train clergy and lay leadership in the district," said Rev. Suess-Pierce. She plans to use methods that helped the Gulf Lower Atlantic District evolve in the last six years from a district where more than half the churches did not have pastors to one where only 10 percent lacked pastors. The three keys to leadership development there were making Samaritan College classes available, starting a district scholarship fund, and working with the clergy in

(see DCs Elected, page 4)

MCC Teaches The Teachers

Eight people from MCC Wichita Falls, TX, including Rev. Margaret Walker, pastor, presented a workshop dispelling myths about homosexuality for administrators in a nearby public school system recently.

"Each of us shared our own coming-out journey and talked about what it's like to be gay and in high school," Rev. Walker said.

The confidential three-hour workshop was attended by 15 facilitators for a student assistance program. "Lots of them came up and thanked us afterward and said they never thought they knew any gay people," Rev. Walker said.

She added that the program benefitted her congregation, too. "It was good for us because most of us had never actually come out to that big a crowd of straight people. It was very exhilerating. Most of us knew in junior high or high school that we were gay, so we knew what teenagers today are going through, it was a real high to think of helping them." ❐

Mr. Bob Heydt

Bob Heydt Joins Staff

Mr. Bob Heydt recently joined the staff of the UFMCC International Headquarters as Accounting Assistant.

His duties are to include responsibility for accounts payable and accounts receivable, bank deposit preparation, invoices, weekly cash flow reports, data entry and shipping for the Church Services Dept. and mailing list management.

Mr. Heydt brings a wealth of job experience, including 10 years in the film and television industry, five years at the Sheet Metal Workers Trust Fund and, most recently, employment as administrative assistant for Christopher Street West, the lesbian/gay pride celebration of Los Angeles, CA.

He earned a bachelor's degree in communications management from Ithaca College and a master's degree in television from Syracuse University. He has been a member of MCC Silverlake for 10 years, including service as treasurer, lay delegate, and member of the board. ❐

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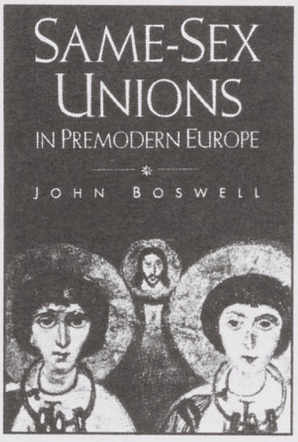

by John Boswell

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Keeping in Touch is a monthly publication of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches. We are a church of the lesbian and gay community, open to all. Our mission is to call people to new life through the liberating gospel of Jesus Christ, confront injustice through Christian social action, and create a community of healing and reconciliation.

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Deadline for each issue: 15th of previous month.

Ms. Nancy Fackrell, Typesetting

Around The Fellowship

Praises

MCC Adelaide, the oldest lesbian and gay organization in South Australia, celebrates its 20th anniversary July 9-10. The pastor is **Mr. Peter Hawkins**.

Rev. Jerry Seay, pastor of **Trinity MCC**, Gainesville, FL, has been named the chair of the Campus Ministry Cooperative for the University of Florida for the 1994-95 school year. This is the first time that an openly gay person has been named to this position.

A **Men's Spiritual Renewal Weekend** is being planned by a Men's Task Force newly established at **MCC Melbourne**, Australia. Coordinator **Benson Bannon** was inspired to form the task force by attending a General Conference workshop on healing the inner child within men.

Rev. Elder Don Eastman, UFMCC treasurer, recently participated in the first formal meeting of the **Council of National Religious AIDS Networks** (USA), which is sponsored by the AIDS National Interfaith Nework and funded by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. ❐

Prayers

Elder Larry Rodriguez' father was hospitalized in Los Angeles in June following a series of 3 strokes. His condition is stable, but doctors are not optimistic about his ability to recover speech or movement.

The father of **Rev. Roy Lenington** died May 31. Rev. Lenington is pastor of **MCC of the Quad Cities**, Rock Island, IL.

Prayers are requested for three MCCs in the **Mid-Central District** that have been attacked recently: **Family of God MCC,** Billings, MT, whose building was defaced by eggs and black spray paint; **MCC Topeka**, KS, which was picketed; and **MCC in the Ozarks**, Springfield, MO, which received hate phone calls. ❐

In Memory

Rev. Grant Brush

Rev. Grant Brush died June 7 in St. Louis, MO of complications due to HIV/AIDS. He was 48.

Rev. Brush served on the staff of MCC of Living Faith in St. Louis since 1989. Before that, he served as administrative assistant at MCC of Greater St. Louis; senior pastor of Church of New Hope MCC, Waterloo, IA; and was a member at MCC of the Rockies, Denver, CO. He was ordained in 1993. He also served on the Mid-Central District Clergy Review Committee and was an active volunteer with the St. Louis Effort for AIDS.

Rev. Brush's spouse, Mr. David King, died in December 1993.

A memorial service was held June 11 in St. Louis. Memorial gifts may be made to MCC of Living Faith.

Mr. Crayne Kam

Mr. Crayne Kam died June 4 from complications of HIV/AIDS.

Mr. Kam was an active member of Golden Gate MCC; the Asian American community of San Francisco, CA; and the UFMCC Department of People of Color.

Mr. Ralph Masek

Mr. Ralph Masek died May 21 in Dallas, TX due to AIDS-related complications.

Mr. Masek was a member of the UFMCC AIDS Ministry Long-Range Planning Task Force. He had served as a board member at Christ Chapel MCC, Santa Ana, CA, and as public relations director at Cathedral of Hope MCC, Dallas.

Mr. Chuck Vickers

Mr. Chuck Vickers died May 25 of complications related to HIV/AIDS. He was well known throughout UFMCC as a member of the singing ensemble "HeartSong." He served as music director at River City MCC, Sacramento, CA, and more recently at First MCC, Wichita, KS.

Top 20 Tithes - May 1994

1.	Cathedral of Hope MCC, Dallas, TX	US $	10,825.48
2.	MCC Washington, Washington, DC		3,781.61
3.	MCC of the Resurrection, Houston, TX		3,320.79
4.	Sunshine Cathedral MCC, Ft. Lauderdale, FL		3,236.75
5.	MCC Toronto, Ontario, Canada	CAN $	2,375.86
6.	MCC Austin, Austin, TX		2,197.27
7.	MCC Long Beach, Long Beach, CA		2,131.82
8.	St. Luke's MCC, Jacksonville, FL		1,930.18
9.	Church of the Trinity MCC, Sarasota, FL		1,601.13
10.	MCC of the Rockies, Denver, CO		1,579.56
11.	MCC San Francisco, San Francisco, CA		1,560.30
12.	MCC of Greater Kansas City, MO		1,256.49
13.	MCC Los Angeles, Culver City, CA		1,191.40
14.	MCC New York, New York City, NY		1,187.55
15.	Church of Our Savior MCC, Boca Raton, FL		1,057.43
16.	Harvest MCC, Denton, TX		999.38
17.	MCC Tampa, Tampa, FL		996.11
18.	First MCC of Atlanta, Atlanta, GA		974.53
19.	Joy MCC, Orlando, FL		933.67
20.	Open Door MCC, Boyds, MD		854.36

{These figures reflect the 10 percent of each local church's monthly income that is reported to Fellowship headquarters.}

Top 20 Per Capita - May 1994

1.	Oasis MCC, Phoenix, AZ	US $	45.08
2.	MCC Ocean of Life, Costa Mesa, CA		43.81
3.	Maranatha Fellowship MCC, Houston, TX		32.79
4.	Harvest MCC, Denton, TX		31.83
5.	MCC of the Peninsula, Redwood City, CA		30.19
6.	Sisterspirit, Portland, OR		29.73
7.	Holy Covenant MCC, Hinsdale, IL		24.71
8.	Open Arms MCC, Rochester, NY		24.15
9.	MCC of Living Faith, St. Louis, MO		23.50
10.	MCC Long Beach, Long Beach, CA		22.00
11.	MCC Baltimore, Baltimore, MD		21.83
12.	MCC of the Resurrection, Houston, TX		21.03
13.	St. Luke's MCC, Jacksonville, FL		20.40
14.	MCC New York, New York City, NY		19.96
15.	New Life MCC, Charlotte, NC		19.32
16.	MCC of the Palm Beaches, W Palm Bch, FL		19.11
17.	Church of the Trinity MCC, Sarasota, FL		19.04
18.	Cathedral of Hope MCC, Dallas, TX		18.98
19.	Church of Our Savior MCC, Boca Raton, FL		18.58
20.	Spirit Eagle MCC, Spring Valley, CA		18.53

{These figures reflect average individual weekly offerings to the local church.}

In Memory

Rev. Cliff Morrison

Rev. Cliff Morrison died May 31 in Birmingham, AL of HIV lymphoma. He was 47.

Rev. Morrison was pastor of Covenant MCC in Birmingham for five years. He was ordained May 11, 1994 through a special accelerated review process due to health considerations.

Rev. Morrison taught at Tauadega School for the Deaf and was a professional musician, playing the timpani with the Alabama Symphony. He designed sets and lighting for little theatre groups in Birmingham.

He is survived by his spouse, Randall Foster.

A memorial service was held June 2 in Birmingham. Memorial gifts may be made to Covenant MCC Building Fund. ❐

Music Praised

MCC musicians recently received rave reviews in *Gay Music Guide*.

The guide included music by Marsha Stevens and by David Heid and Jane Syftestad.

All Ms. Stevens' albums got good reviews, but the latest, "I Still Have a Dream," is called "an absolutely spectacular album from start to finish...If Marsha Stevens is the house band in heaven, even I'll be good" (the reviewer writes). "A collection of glorious songs that only goes to prove that God is on our side," was written about David and Jane's tape. ❐

DCs Elected

(continued from page 1)

the district to train lay leaders. Rev. Suess-Pierce served as GLAD assistant district coordinator from 1989-91. She has also been senior pastor of MCC Huntsville, AL since 1986.

Rev. Suess-Pierce will attend the dedication of MCC Huntsville's new building July 30 before moving to the Northwest District, where she will be based in the Portland, OR area. ❐

EXCEL Program Promotes Diversity

"Excelling in Diversity" is a new program being developed by EXCEL International, a layled spiritual education program of UFMCC.

Mr. Keith Apple, executive director of EXCEL, said he hopes that people who attend the new program will learn about, accept and empower diversity in UFMCC in a wide range of areas, including theological, racial, ethnic, age, gender and ability diversity.

The pilot program of Excelling in Diversity will be held Oct. 7-9 at Point Bonita Conference Center in northern California. The program was created in partnership with Mother River Spirit, a special ministry of the Northwest District.

Although the program will have no prerequisites, every person of European ancestry is asked to ally themselves and apply with a person of color. People of color are asked to ally with someone who is a "stretch" for them due to difference in class, age, ethnicity, gender, size, religious background, etc. Men are also asked to ally and apply with a woman. The intent is to create opportunities for building alliances.

"We are so excited about the possibilities of it," said Mr. Apple. "If this program proves to be successful and useful, we want to spread it throughout the Fellowship."

For more information, please contact EXCEL at (510) 547-8386. ❐

Clergy Manuals Ready

The 1994-95 Clergy Manuals are now available from UFMCC Church Services for $45.00. The manuals include a supplement that outlines the changes proposed by Clergy Credentials and Concerns Committee (CCCC) and accepted by the General Council.

The "change pages" to the 1993 CCCC Manual can be ordered for $10.00. Please note that the liscensing and ordination forms have been changed and applicants will need the new manual or the changed pages to get the new forms. ❐

Canadians

(continued from page 1)

(the lobbying group formed to promote passage of this legislation) to encourage a massive education campaign to counteract the backlash of conservative religious groups who opposed the legislation.

The next step is development of a legal defense fund to cover the costs of individual lawsuits to challenge the provincial and federal laws which discriminate against gay/lesbian people in areas of pension rights, employment benefits for spouses, adoption of children, and inheritance laws. Additionally, a concerted effort will be applied at a federal level to advocate correction of the inequities currently legislated. Across Canada, there are a few suits currently addressing the inequities in adoption, employment benefits, pension rights and inheritance laws. ❐

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ORGANIZATIONS

Gay & Lesbian Square Dancing. Fun! Friends! Info on Clubs in your area or help starting a new one. International Association of Gay Square Dance Clubs, P.O. Box 15428, Crystal City, VA 22215-0428. (800) 835-6462.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

Emmanuel MCC, Spokane, WA is seeking a stable, nuturing Pastor. Contact Pastoral Search Committee, c/o Mr. Jim McGuirk, 511 S. Hemlock St., #6, Spokane, WA 99204.

Cathedral of Hope MCC Dallas is seeking a part-time choral director and part-time organist. David McCollough, PO Box 35466, Dallas, TX 75235.

Holy Cross MCC in Pensacola, Florida seeks a dynamic, Christ centered full-time Senior Pastor. Strong administrative skills, computer literacy, and good spiritual leadership a plus. Send resume to: Pastoral Search Committee, Holy Cross MCC, 415 N. Alcaniz St., Pensacola, FL 32501 by September 2, 1994.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

Do you feel called to share a vision, spreading the good news in central Iowa? Church of the Holy Spirit, MCC, celebrating 20 years in the heartland, seeks full time pastor for our chartered church. Reply to Pastor Search Committee, PO Box 21010, Des Moines, Iowa 50321. Resumes accepted through September 1, 1994.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Houts Investigations, Box 122058, Arlington, TX 76012. 817-265-1354. (FAX): 817-860-7379. Serving the needs of Churches, Attorneys, and Individuals after consultation and case review. References available.

Leadership & People of Colors Conferences
Aug. 2-7
See You There!